During the year 2011, the CIA failed to target more than eight senior militant leaders in drone attacks. These eight militant leaders include four Al-Qaeda figures and four senior commanders of Pakistani Taliban associated with Al-Qaeda

By Ahsan Khalil
Summary

According to the Conflict Monitoring Center’s annual report on drone attacks American Spy Agency CIA has failed to eliminate more than four Al-Qaeda leaders in its highly costly and controversial ‘assassination by drones’ campaign inside Pakistan during the year 2011. It had carried out 75 drone attacks inside Pakistani territory during the year 2011 killing 609 people, among them only three were Arab commanders of Al-Qaeda; one was UK’s most wanted and just four were senior commanders of different factions of Pakistani militants. During the year 2011 collaboration and cooperation between CIA and ISI turned into confrontation. After arrest of CIA agent Raymond Davis and Abbottabad Operation, ISI busted many modules of local and international CIA agents active in the country. As a result American agency was deprived off human intelligence in many areas of North and South Waziristan. This led to ineffectiveness of the drone attacks against militant leadership. During the confrontation, the CIA also conducted revenge attacks in Pakistan. Due to differences between American State Department and the CIA, at the occasion of almost every high level meeting between Pakistani and American authorities, the CIA carried out a drone attack. American premier agency effectively undermined public diplomacy of its own government.

Conflict Monitoring Center’s tally of the drone attacks shows that overall number of drone attacks since 2004 has crossed the figure of 300 and So far 2661 people have been killed in 303 drone attacks.

The Conflict Monitoring Center (CMC), an independent research center which regularly monitors drone attacks in Pakistan has prepared an annual report (2011) on drone attacks inside Pakistani territory. The report is based on the data collected from mainstream national and international media, e.g. CNN, NY Times, Al-Jazeera, Daily Dawn, The News, Daily Times, Geo News, Daily Express, Daily Ummat, Daily Mashriq, Daily Aaj and other news organizations.

The report notes 43 percent decline in drone attacks during the year 2011 than 2010. The CIA had conducted 132 drone attacks in 2010. The Number of fatalities in drone attacks has also dropped by 35 percent.

Mounting protest and public backlash against drone attacks as well as tension between US and Pakistan during the year led to the decline in drone attacks. U.S. has suspended drone attacks after an attack by NATO helicopters on a Pakistani military check post on November 26, 2011.

An unprecedented increase in Drone Attacks in South Waziristan was observed during the year. In the past, drone attacks in South Waziristan were rare in numbers as 90 percent of the attacks in 2010 occurred in North Waziristan. During the year 2011, South Waziristan was more frequently targeted. Drone attacks in South Waziristan were increased by 60 percent. During the year 2010 which was deadllest year of the history of Drone attacks in Pakistan with highest ever number of drone attacks and subsequent deaths, only 9 out of 132 strikes were carried out in South Waziristan. However, in 2011 the number of attacks increased to 23. In North Waziristan, the CIA carried out 50 strikes while two strikes were carried out in Kurram Agency.

American drones fired 242 AGM-114 Hellfire missiles during the year and destroyed 38 houses, 37 vehicles, one camp and a Madrassa. One such missile costs for $68000 which means the CIA spent $16.456 million or 1.5 billion Pakistani Rupees to kill 609 people. In average, ammunition cost of every single casualty was $27000 or 2.4 million Pakistani rupees. If other expenses are included the
overall cost of killing one suspected militant will further rise. It may become point of concern for American tax payer that such a huge amount of money was spent just to eliminate four Al-Qaeda leaders and four Taliban commanders and during the process strained relations with key US ally in War on Terror, a diplomatic and political cost which cannot be measured in terms of pennies and dollars but can impact the overall result of the war against Al-Qaeda and Taliban.

Contrary to American claims of only 50 civilian deaths during past eight years, a UK based media organization The Bureau of Investigative Journalism confirmed that a minimum of 391 and a maximum of 780 innocent civilians including 175 children have so far been killed in drone attacks.

Although Pakistani government has publically opposed Drone attacks but its 'anonymous' security officials kept playing dubious role while releasing false details of Drone Attacks. The government also failed to devise any plan to record casualties of civilians and militants by drone attacks. No comprehensive compensation policy for civilian victims of these attacks is in place however the government has announced .3 million for each of the victims of infamous March 17 attack on a peace Jirga in North Waziristan which killed 40 tribemen. Drone attacks have emerged as a cause of the problem rather than a solution. During the year many public demonstrations were held against drone attacks in different parts of Pakistan while National Assembly, Senate, Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkha Assemblies passed resolutions to condemn drone attacks. Besides public protests, there are at least three court cases pending against drone attacks in three different courts of Pakistan.

### Total Drone Attacks in 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>No. of Drone Attacks</th>
<th>Reported Max Deaths</th>
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<td>January</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
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<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>75</strong></td>
<td><strong>609</strong></td>
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### Yearly Comparison of Drone Attacks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period/ Year</th>
<th>No. of Drone Attacks</th>
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<td>109</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>938</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>609</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>303</strong></td>
<td><strong>2661</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. High Profile Deaths in Drone Attacks

The basic objective of the drone attacks in Pakistan was to eliminate Al-Qaeda’s top leadership. However during the year 2011, the CIA failed to target more than eight senior militant leaders in drone attacks. These eight militant leaders include four Al-Qaeda figures and four senior commanders of Pakistani Taliban associated with Al-Qaeda. Among them were

- Abu Zaid al-Iraqi (Al-Qaeda's Financial chief in Pakistan),
- Atiyah Abd al-Rahman (One of the senior most Al-Qaeda leaders after Ayman Al-Zawahiri)
- Abu Hafs al-Shahri (Al-Qaeda’s operational chief in Pakistan)
- Ibraheem Adam (UK’s most wanted militant) along with Azmir Khan 37 was killed in North Waziristan
- Ilyas Kashmiri (Chief of Al-Qaeda affiliate Harkatul Jihad El Islami 313 Brigade, However Asia Times Online disputed his death and claimed that he is still alive)
- Taj Gul Mehsud (a senior deputy to Hakeemullah Mehsud)
- Khan Mohammad, (Maulvi Nazir’s deputy commander)
- Janbaz Zadran (senior Haqqani commander)

Low Ranking militant commanders killed in drone attacks

- Hazrat Gul (Younger Brother of Commander Molvi Nazeer)
- Umar Wazir (Mullah Nazir’s older brother was killed along with Khan Muhammad, Miraj Wazir & Ashfaq)
- Commander Hazrat Ali, Sher Ali & Amir Hamza
- Haleem Ullah (Mullah Nazir group)
- Moulana Bashir (Hafiz Gul Bahadur group)
- Saifulah (An Australian associated with Hafiz Gul Bahadur group)

Security experts in Pakistan say that after the arrest of Raymond Davis Pakistan was able to unearth CIA’s secret modules active in the country and busted them. During the standoff Pakistan expelled CIA’s many agents who were roaming in the country without permission and knowledge of Pakistani authorities. After Abbottabad operation Pakistan had started an aggressive operation against CIA’s local agents in the country. The CIA was successfully deprived off from its human intelligence in many parts of the country. Another campaign against CIA’s human intelligence was already underway in North and South Waziristan by the militants. Reportedly Pakistan had suspended its intelligence cooperation with the US in Waziristan area after the Abbottabad operation. All these factors contributed to ineffectiveness of the drone campaign against militant leaders. Although the CIA has a technological superiority due to its ability to use undetected drone’s for surveillance in the area but it is now lacking human intelligence in the area to countercheck the accuracy and significance of the target. Perhaps this was one of the reasons that in many attacks the CIA had killed ordinary tribesmen instead of militants. Keeping in the mind the local custom of carrying weapons by almost every male adult in the area, it is almost impossible to distinguish between the militants and ordinary tribesmen without effective human intelligence.

2. Al-Qaeda Shifting its Base?
Apart from tension between Pakistan and US there can be another significant reason that drones could not target more than three Arab commanders of Al-Qaeda in FATA. After the emergence of 'Arab Spring' Al-Qaeda's 'self-exiled' fighters are going back to Arab and African countries to play their role in toppling 'anti-jihad' regimes. In Libya these fighters played a vital role in toppling Qaddafi government and now Al-Qaeda is active in Syria too. A paradigm shift in US strategy towards radical Islamist groups has enabled Al-Qaeda fighters locked in Pakistan's tribal area to go back to their homelands and merge into revolutionary opposition forces. After the rise of Arab springs, grip and writ of many Arab governments have become weaken. These governments are not able to crackdown on Al-Qaeda due to their own compulsions. Due to this strategic shift of Al-Qaeda's focus, less Arab fighters are available for drones to hit. However this 'migration' of Al-Qaeda may weaken its influence on Afghan Taliban and indirectly pave way for a political solution of the conflict.

3. Elimination of Militants not the only Objective
After the arrest of CIA’s agent Raymond Davis the ISI started busting CIA’s cell in the country. Both the intelligence agencies locked horns instead of cooperation and collaboration against their common enemy. The CIA was furious and started ‘punitive’ drone attacks to avenge against ISI. It was for the first time revealed that elimination of militants was not the only objective of the CIA’s assassination campaign. The CIA was taking lives of many innocent civilians just to satisfy its ego. The infamous drone attack of March 17, which killed 40 innocent tribesmen attending a tribal Jirga, was also a revenge act for the detention of CIA operative Raymond Davis for 7 weeks in custody in Lahore for killing two Pakistanis. After revelation of CIA’s ‘revenge’ operation, the whole ‘assassination by drones’ campaign has come under radar of doubts.

Such revenge attacks by the CIA raise the issue of legality of this campaign, which is already controversial all over the world. It is well known fact that drone attacks work as a cause of recruitment of members of affected families into militants ranks. Politically motivated attacks by US spy agency are causing more complications for Pakistan to restore peace in the area.

4. CIA and State Department at odd over drone attacks
It is evident from timeline of drone attacks that the CIA and US State Department were not on the same page on the issue relations with Pakistan. The CIA often undermined State Department’s diplomatic efforts by drone attacks during or after key meetings between Pakistani and American officials. Both the departments had developed differences over timings of drone attacks. When CIA agent Raymond Davis was in custody in Pakistan over killing of two Pakistanis, US ambassador to Pakistan requested CIA to suspend attacks until he could be released from Pakistani custody, but his request was met with outrageous attack on a tribal Jirga killing at least 40 people. During the September 2010, when State Department and Pentagon were trying to win hearts and minds of Pakistani public by providing aid to flood victims, CIA suddenly intensified drone attacks to an unprecedented level, which prompted protests against US all over Pakistan. It seems CIA does not care much about public diplomacy of State Department. However, after months of efforts US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton was able to have State Department’s say in the timings of drone attacks. The final decision still lies with the CIA.
5. CIA followed Marc Grossman with Drone Attacks

Can anyone believe that almost every time US special envoy to Afghanistan and Pakistan Marc Grossman visited Pakistan in 2011, the CIA followed him with drones? On October 13, 2011, he visited Pakistan for the fifth time since he was appointed to this office in February 2011. During his visit, American spy agency the CIA carried out two drone attacks in Pakistan, one in North Waziristan while the other in South Waziristan. The series of drone attacks started from his visit continued for three days during which the CIA has carried out four drone strikes inside Pakistani territory. It is not clear whether the CIA is unhappy with his appointment or something else forces premier American intelligence agency to carry out drone attacks during his visits to Pakistan. Mark Grossman first time came to Pakistan as special envoy to Afghanistan and Pakistan on 8th of March. On same day, CIA carried out a drone attack killing five people. Again he was in Pakistan for a two-day visit on May 18 and 19, the very next day CIA carried out a drone attack in North Waziristan killing six people. During his visit to Pakistan on August 2, CIA once again struck a drone attack in North Waziristan. Drone attack on October 13 in north and south Waziristan on the eve of Grossman’s visit to Pakistan was fourth such ‘coincidence’.

There was only one occasion when Mr. Grossman came to Pakistan but there was no drone attack because a bigger thing had already happened just a day before his arrival. He came to see Pakistani leadership on next day of Abbottabad operation. Interestingly, such type of ‘coincidence’ is not attached only to Marc Grossman. During the year 2011, the CIA had carried out a drone attack on the eve of almost every high-level meeting or visit. Among them were attacks that followed an April visit by Director General ISI Ahmad Shuja Pasha to Washington as well as trips to Islamabad by Sen. John Kerry and Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton.

6. Cost of Killing One Militant

American drones fired 242 AGM-114 Hellfire missiles during the year and destroyed 38 houses, 37 vehicles, one camp and a Madrassa. One such missile costs for $68000 which means the CIA spent $16.456 million or 1.5 billion Pakistani Rupees to kill 609 people. In average, ammunition cost of every single casualty was $27000 or 2.4 million Pakistani rupees. If other expenses are included the overall cost of killing one suspected militant will further increase. It may become point of concern for American tax payer that such a huge amount of money is spent just to eliminate three Al-Qaeda leaders and four Taliban commanders and during the process strained relations with key US ally in War on Terror, a diplomatic and political cost which cannot be measured in terms of pennies and dollars but can impact the overall result of the war against Al-Qaeda and Taliban.

The drone campaign during the year 2011 has eliminated apparently less significant targets with relatively very high political cost. U.S. had pledged $7.5 billion for Pakistan under Kerry-Lugar Act. One of the main purposes of this aid was to promote good image of U.S. in Pakistani public. During 2010 floods, U.S. military and USAID did a great job to help Pakistani public. All this public diplomacy was severely damaged by drone attacks, which are considered by general public as attacks on
Pakistan’s sovereignty. Pakistani parliament in a resolution expressed its deepest anger against drone attacks by asking the government to stop NATO supply route if these attacks continue. U.S. spends millions of dollars for its ‘assassination by drones’ campaign and pledged billions of dollars to make a good impact in the eyes of Pakistan. It is not understandable why it is just killing the unnamed foot soldiers, suspected militants and civilians with such a high cost.

7. Civilians Killings and role of Pakistani Government

It was practice as usual by anonymous security officials to release details of every single drone attacks and declare that all those killed were militants but routinely they have not disclosed names of the victims. However, in the past many of these unverified claims proved false as the people who were termed as militants were actually civilians. Pakistani government publically criticizes drone attacks but has done nothing to record identities of the victims of this controversial campaign. Independent media persons or researchers neither have proper access to the area for a number of obstacles nor have enough resources to record and verify every casualty in the area. The government has all the resources to record names and other identities of the victims but does nothing to fulfill its responsibility. A charter signed by casualty monitoring organizations from all over the world and sponsored by Oxford Research Group have signed an international charter which demands that governments must record exact number and identities of the victims of armed conflict but the government of Pakistan has done nothing to do this essential job. This practice raises serious concerns on the role of Pakistan’s Federal Government as well as FATA secretariat directly controlled by the President of Pakistan and run by its representative, the Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkha province. Government has also not set up any compensation mechanism for the civilian victims of drone attacks.

On the other hand the CIA too is hiding all facts from public regarding drone attacks to avoid any legal implications. International law expert consider this drone campaign against human rights and demand and end to it.

8. US Admits errors in identifying friends from foes in Drone Attacks

An official investigation conducted by the Pentagon has underlined a series of errors which can kill friends instead of foes. The inquiry was conducted after two US soldiers were killed in a drone attack inside Afghanistan. Ironically United States has not carried out any official investigation for the deaths of innocent civilians in Pakistan caused by its lethal drone campaign. There are many proven incidents when drones killed only civilians. Such an attack was observed on 31st of October 2011 when a young boy Tariq Khan along with his cousin was killed in a drone attack. An independent investigation is required to ascertain whether the CIA had killed him deliberately to punish him for his participation in a protest against drone attacks in Pakistani capital Islamabad. Just four days after his participation in the protest he was ‘eliminated’. In the past the CIA had carried out such drone attacks which were vengeful and punitive in nature like the one it carried out on March 17, 2011, killing more than 40 civilians to avenge detention of its spy Raymond Davis who had killed two

4 http://www.thebureauinvestigates.com/2011/11/02/two-boys-reported-killed-in-cia-strike/
Pakistani citizens in Lahore in February. Like killing of Tariq Khan and attack on tribal Jirga, there are many other cases which need independent investigation because only civilians were killed in those attacks. Although hundreds of its civilians have died in drone attacks since 2004, Pakistani government has not conducted any official inquiry to any of these incidents where civilians were killed which highlights its seriousness towards the drone attacks.

9. Dubious role of Pakistani Security Officials
It were Pakistani anonymous security officials who had claimed that two to four militants were killed in the drone attack carried out by the CIA on October 31, 2011 in which above mentioned Tariq Khan and his cousin were killed. One of the officials told CNN and AFP that four militants were killed. In principle Pakistan is opposing drone attacks then why these security officials regularly release body counts to international media? In every statement it is mentioned that these officials are not authorized to speak on the issue. Is it breach of official code of conduct or these officials are assigned the duty of releasing body count and related information to the media. Apparently it looks an official duty which is performed in unofficial capacity. The doubtful and unreliable credibility of these Pakistani security officials is evident from the fact that they released misleading and misleading information about deadliest and most controversial attacks of the year 2011. On March 17, 2011 when CIA had killed at least 40 tribesmen in a drone attacks, the ‘anonymous’ Pakistani security officials initially declared that 22 suspected militants were killed. The attack was so irritating for Pakistan that Pakistani Army Chief Ashfaq Pervez Kayani had issued a rare condemnation of the attack. It is a question whether these anonymous ‘security officials’ work under military command or they are part of the civilians set up. If they are people from Army or ISI then it would be more embarrassing that the Chief is condemning civilian casualties while his sub-ordinates claim that ‘suspected’ militants were killed. There is no known investigation conducted by either civil government or military to investigate why these Pakistani security officials declared tribesmen as militants. There is a need to investigate false claims and also government should clarify its position that if it is against drone attacks then why its officials work as spokesmen for the CIA to release details of every drone attack. Revelation of false claims by security officials create doubts on overall credibility of media coverage of drone attacks as apart from few local newspapers from Peshawar the entire world rely on the claims of anonymous security officials.

10. Protest against Drone Attacks
The public protest against drone attacks started during late in 2010 continued in 2011. Sportsman turned politician Imran Khan’s Pakistan Tehreek Insaf (Pakistan Justice Movement) was at forefront. Imran Khan staged two effective ‘Sit-ins’ (Dharna) in Peshawar, Karachi and Islamabad. During the Dharna in Karachi and Peshawar NATO supply was effectively suspended. Jamat-e-Islami also staged protests against drone attacks in different parts of the country. Mainstream political parties expressed their condemnation of drone attacks in Provincial Assemblies, National Assembly and

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5 http://blogs.rediff.com/mkbhadrakumar/2011/08/03/the-cia-was-angry/  
Senate. Civil society, traders and people from other walks of life also arranged protests against drone attacks. The year 2011 can be called the 'year of protest' against drone attacks. T

11. **Legal Fronts against Drone Attacks**

In November 2011 a constitutional petition was filed in the Supreme Court praying for declaring any secret agreement between Pakistan and US forces allowing US drone attacks in the territory of Pakistan as unlawful and ultra vires of the Constitution. The petitioner also prayed to the apex court for declaring the agreement of Pakistan government with US/NATO/ISAF forces allowing them use of Shamsi Airbase as unlawful and against the sovereignty of the country. Sami-ul-Haq, Chairman Pakistan Defence Council and Chief of JUI-S, had filed the petition under Article 184(3), making the federation, Government of Pakistan, ministries of Defence, Interior, Foreign Affairs, and four provincial governors and chief secretaries as respondents. The petitioner prayed to the apex court to direct the Federation to publish and declare all the agreements which have been negotiated with US/NATO/ISAF void.

Two separate legal petitions are already being heard in Lahore and Peshawar High Courts. In June this year, Hafiz Muhammad Saeed, Amir of Jamat-ud-Dawah had filed a petition against drone attacks. Many hearings have been conducted so far but the court still waits for proper response from the federal government on the issue. Hafiz Saeed had filed a constitutional petition through Advocate A.K. Dogar, praying that the federal government be directed to make public information in all matters of public importance, especially “secret deals” made with the US government, as Article 19-A of the Constitution entitled every citizen of Pakistan to have access to all information11. During one of the hearings Justice Sheikh Azmat Saeed of the Lahore High Court had rejected a report and comments by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs about US drone attacks on Pakistani soil and directed the ministry to file a satisfactory reply and also inform the court about the implementation of a resolution unanimously passed by parliament against drone attacks12.

A lawyer affiliated with the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), FM Sabir, had also filed a writ petition in Peshawar High Court against the drone attacks. He submitted before the court to direct the respondents to stop drone attacks and NATO air strikes as these were against the collective will of 180 million Pakistanis. On November 16 The Peshawar High Court (PHC) issued notices to the federal government and directed it to explain whether these strikes were being carried out with the government’s consent. A two-member PHC bench comprising Chief Justice Ejaz Afzal Khan and Justice Yahya Afridi admitted the writ petition for full hearing and issued notices to all the respondents, including the Federation of Pakistan through the Ministry of Defence, Federal Secretary Defence and Federal Secretary Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government through chief secretary and political agents of both South and North Waziristan tribal regions.

In July the relatives of US drone victims in Pakistan had filed a complaint seeking an international arrest warrant for a former CIA official, John Rizzo. The complaint lodged with police in the capital Islamabad calls on the Interpol and the US to issue an international arrest warrant against Rizzo over

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The retired official has also worked at the CIA General Council under the administration of Barack Obama.¹³